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SUBJECT: JULY 22 XINJIANG SITREP

REF: BEIJING 2083 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Deputy Political Section Chief
Ben Moeling. Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Embassy officers present in Xinjiang received no additional reports of violence in the region. In Kashgar, the Embassy team encountered surveillance July 22. Several plain clothes security officers, thinly disguised as Han Chinese tourists, followed and took video of the Embassy officers. The team did not notice unusual security in Kashgar, except for 25-30 police stationed in front of a major mosque. Police asked Embassy officers in the plaza outside the mosque for identification, and told them they could not "conduct interviews" in Kashgar because they did not have journalist credentials. EmbOffs witnessed loudspeaker trucks broadcasting propaganda messages in Uighur. A Uighur waiter told EmbOffs that the messages were urging monetary donations for victims of the Urumqi riots.

¶2. (C) Despite the obvious surveillance of EmbOffs, the general security posture in Kashgar appeared to be more relaxed than in Urumqi. There were noticeably fewer People's Armed Police personnel in Kashgar. A security checkpoint was in place July 22 just outside the Kashgar airport on the road leading into the city. Police at the checkpoint were screening every person. A taxi driver told Embassy officers that the extra screening was because of concern about people "coming over the border" into Xinjiang. (Note: There are several direct flights per week between Kashgar and Islamabad.) On a major road leading into the Western part of Kashgar, EmbOffs witnessed a local police checkpoint that was stopping and searching all trucks entering the city. In addition to searching vehicles, local police were checking documents and writing down ID numbers for all passengers. EmbOffs witnessed two Uighurs being stopped by local police and, after questioning, being driven away in a police car. The Embassy team will return to Urumqi on July 23.

¶3. (U) The Urumqi riots received only scattered coverage in domestic newspapers July 22, a day when a solar eclipse that crossed central China dominated the news. In a July 21 press conference, State Ethnic Affairs Commission Vice Minister Wu Shimin reiterated government claims that the July 5 Urumqi riot was "schemed and fabricated by the 'three forces' of extremism, separatism and terrorism both at home and abroad." Wu said, according to the Xinhua News Agency, that the fact the riots only occurred in Urumqi "proved it had nothing to do with national ethnic policies." Wu acknowledged some "conflicts and frictions" between ethnic groups, but noted that these have been solved.

¶4. (U) Xinhua also reported comments related to the U.S. public stance on Xinjiang by Vice Foreign Minister He Yafei at a July 22 press briefing about the upcoming U.S.-China Strategic and Economic Dialogue. VFM He told journalists that China had noticed the United States' "prudent" (jinshen) statements, though he stressed that the Urumqi riots were China's internal affair. He said the United States should "restrain" Rebiya Kadeer and not allow her to use U.S. soil to engage in separatism.

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